

Statement of Events
CWO Michael Hammond
MSD Ft. Myers, Fl.

Two (2) pages total including this cover

Statement of events on or about Monday 30 December 2002 as recalled by CWO4 Michael J. Hammond:

Note: All times are approximate.

1600 hrs: Heard initial report of a vessel sinking in the Everglades National Park on NBC-2. Notified MSD duty inspector LT Allain of incident via phone; concurred this incident occurred in MSO Miami zone.

1615 hrs: Received phone call from CO Station Ft. Myers Beach notifying MSD Ft. Myers of vessel sinking, explained that it was in MSO Miami's zone and he should notify them of the incident.

1700 hrs: Received call from LCDR Mike Holland (CID MSO Tampa) with a D7 request that our unit respond to Everglades City, FL to provide initial CG presence to vessel sinking.

1725 hrs: Received phone call from LT Allain, discussed response and I volunteered to accompany him to Everglades City, FL; agreed to meet at MSD office in 20-30min.

1800 hrs: Departed MSD Ft. Myers enroute Everglades City, FL.

1930 hrs: Arrived at Everglades National Park office in Everglades City, FL; met with Park Ranger Kiefer Gier and was informed that the vessel PANTHER was still submerged at marker 7 and being watched by a Park Ranger. Also that a salvage team dispatched by the vessel's owner was standing by on scene. I was informed that the vessel's captain had been taken to a local motel to rest. Ranger Gier also gave a brief description of what the captain had said concerning the incident; that the vessel appeared to be a little low in the water back aft, thought it was due to several "large" passengers sitting aft. He got the vessel underway and noted all three bilge pumps operating automatically. Shortly afterwards a crab boat passed by and the wake washed over the stern causing the PANTHER to sink within 2-3 seconds. The passengers swam to vessels which quickly came to their aid. Ranger Gier also mentioned that the Captain was told by the vessel's owner Sammy Hamilton to say that a deckhand was onboard at the time (Hamilton's 10yr old nephew). Ranger Gier had a list of 34 passenger names and addresses that were on the vessel at the time of sinking.

1950 hrs: Contacted MSO Miami open to see if anyone was responding from there. Found out that two IO's were enroute.

2030 hrs: Met with vessel owner Sammy Hamilton, issued him a CG-2692 Report of Marine Accident to fill out and submit to MSO Miami. He mentioned that a wake of the passing crab boat caused the vessel to swamp and sink but he didn't want to point fingers cause it's a small community. He said that 29 passengers went out and 29 were rescued and that he could show us the ticket count. Had him send a vehicle to fetch the vessel captain.

2050 hrs: Vessel captain James Mays arrived, brought him up to the Ranger office, asked for the details of the incident which matched what he told the Ranger earlier. Asked Captain Mays to provide a written statement which he typed out on the Ranger's PC.

2115: IO's arrive from MSO Miami. Gave CWO DeJesus and his partner briefing on what information we had. Introduced MSO Miami IO's to Ranger Gier, vessels captain, and vessels owner.

2130: Departed Everglades City, FL enroute MSD Ft. Myers, FL

2245: Arrived MSD FT. Myers, FL

CWO4 *Michael J. Hammond*

3 JAN 03

OPTIONAL FORM 99 (7-90)

FAX TRANSMITTAL

of pages 1

To <i>Bob Ford</i>	From <i>CWO4 Mike Hammond</i>
Dept./Agency <i>MSB</i>	Phone # <i>239 985 0560</i>
Fax # <i>239 353 0035</i>	Fax # <i>239 985 0561</i>

NSN 7540-01-317-7368

5099-101

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION